

USS BENEVOLENCE APH-113
c/o Fleet Post Office
San Francisco, Calif.

HISTORICAL SUPPLEMENT

Narrative Account

The U.S.S. Benevolence, Ah-13, was converted to a hospital ship from a C-4-S-B2 hull, at the Todd Shipbuilding Corporation, Erie Basin, Brooklyn, New York. She is one of six such hospital ships which were designated by the Bureau of Ships for conversion as hospital ships and is of the Haven Class.

9 The U.S.S. Benevolence was placed in commission as a hospital ship of the U.S. Navy at 1030 on 12 May 1945, under the command of Captain Clyde C. Laws, U.S. Navy. The Senior Medical Officer was Captain Frederick L. McDaniel, U.S. Navy. A complete list of officers, nurses and hospital corpsman, who were attached on the commissioning date is appended. A copy of the plan of the day for the commissioning date is appended.

After loading stores at 35th Street Pier in Brooklyn, New York, the Benevolence, on 20 May 1945, proceeded to Hampton Roads, Virginia for ship trials and indoctrination of personnel, arriving on 22 May 1945.

Following an overhaul period of two weeks in the Norfolk Navy Yard the Benevolence departed the Chesapeake Bay area on 16 June 1945 and arrived at the Panama Canal on 21 June 1945.

Transit of the Canal was made on 22 June 1945 and on 24 June 1945 the Benevolence proceeded on her way to Pearl Harbor, Territory of Hawaii, arriving at that point on 6 July 1945. After a stay of eleven days the Benevolence departed Pearl Harbor on 17 July 1945 and arrived at Eniwetok in the Marshall Islands on 24 July 1945.

The Benevolence remained in Eniwetok for nineteen days, servicing the ships in that area, and admitting one hundred forty four patients for treatment. On 12 August 1945 the Benevolence joined the Third Fleet under the command of Admiral William F. Halsey Jr., U.S. Navy, in the U.S.S. Missouri.

On 28 August 1945 the Benevolence entered Sagami Wan, Honshu, Japan with the Third Fleet.

At about 1800 on 29 August 1945, the ship was ordered to standby to receive released prisoners of war from the Japanese prison camps in the Tokyo area, for processing and physical examinations. At about 1900, the first group of released prisoners of war arrived at the Benevolence anchorage off Tokyo. During the period from 1900, August 29, 1945 until 2400 August 31, 1945 a grand total of 1521 recovered allied military personnel were received aboard the Benevolence. Of this number, 343 were admitted to the sick list for treatment.

These recovered allied military personnel received on board the Benevolence during this period, were processed, personal data obtained, examined physically, given a hot bath, issued new clothing, fed and disposed of either by admission to the sick list or transferred to other ships. The majority were handled from 1900 on August 29, 1945 until 2400 on August 30, 1945, a total elapsed time of 31 hours.

29 August 1945

MEDICAL REPORT OF EVACUATION OF P.O.W.'S.

Began evacuating the stretcher cases from Omari, "headquarters Camp", about 1830. About 559 P.O.W.'s, with some 17 stretcher cases were evacuated to the U.S.S. BENEVOLENCE. Al MOHER, Comdr., (U.S.S. HOUSTON) was senior officer present. He was thin and drawn but otherwise looked in fair shape. He had been subjected to gross mistreatment.

Shifted the evacuation to Shinagawa with 180 P.O.W.'s of which 127 were patients, at about 2030, Shinagawa is the P.O.W. Hospital for all prison camps in the area. There were 60 stretcher cases evacuated, most of whom were in an utterly deplorable condition.

There were 26 open cases of pulmonary tuberculosis, and 9 quiescent cases. Diphtheria - 7 cases, Beri beri - 15 cases all seriously ill. Surgical traumatic cases - 15. There were many cases with open wounds. There were about 27 cases of amoebic dysentery, most of which were mild. There was one corpse (Scottish) in the so called morgue, which was a saw dust pile with some old bicycles and scrap metal lying around. He had been dead for about 24 hours or more. Raw faeces were visible in several small vegetable gardens. In the ward containing some beri beri cases, a leaky bed pan filled to the top, (having been used by several patients) had spilled out on the deck. Patients tracked through this mire, too weary or excited to care. This hell-hole defies imagination.

Completed evacuation of Shinagawa at 0330, and went back to Omari, completing there and arriving aboard the BENEVOLENCE at 0515.

There was one patient, Major William H. Walker, B-29 pilot, who had come up from Ofuna on 27 August, who was in a critical condition, with severe dyspnea, dementia and irregular pulse, evacuated from Shinagawa. This patient had been grossly mistreated at Shinagawa and prior to this arrival, according to the history.

On 30 August evacuated all P.O.W.'s, 131, from Dai Ni Bunsho (Kawasaki Camp No. 1) at about 1030. This camp was formerly known as Mitsui Camp No. 2. After a bombing of some months ago, it was split into two camps. All of these P.O.W.'s were in much better condition than those seen last night. Report three cases of mild recurring Malaria, two cases amoebic dysentery, several cases of boils and three cases of arthritis. Two men were running fever from an unknown cause. All cases were ambulatory.

Evacuated Kawasaki Camp No. 2. 270 men, in afternoon, all in fair general condition. No stretcher cases.

While most of these cases appear to be in fair general condition, it is my belief that they all are suffering from malnutrition and should be carefully screened before evacuation.

G. B. CREAGH,
Medical Officer, CTG 30.6

Certified to be a true copy:

J. A. Mahan
J. A. MAHAN, LT(HC) USN.

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| <u>PLACE</u> | <u>ARRIVED</u> | <u>DEPARTED</u> | <u>DAYS IN PORT</u> | <u>DAYS AT SEA</u> |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Commissioned | 12 May 1945 | | | |
| Erie Basin, Brooklyn, New York | 12 May 1945 | 17 May 1945 | 5 | 2 hrs. |
| Bayonne, New Jersey | 17 May 1945 | 18 May 1945 | 1 | 1 |
| Brooklyn, New York | 19 May 1945 | 20 May 1945 | 1 | 2 |
| Norfolk, Virginia | 22 May 1945 | 23 May 1945 | 1 | 9 |
| Portsmouth, Virginia | 2 June 1945 | 16 June 1945 | 14 | 5 |
| Cristobal, Panama, Canal Zone | 21 June 1945 | 22 June 1945 | 1 | 10 hrs |
| Balboa, Panama Canal Zone | 22 June 1945 | 24 June 1945 | 2 | 12 hrs |
| Pearl Harbor, T.H. | 6 July 1945 | 17 July 1945 | 11 | 7 |
| Eniwetok, Marshall Islands | 24 July 1945 | 12 August 1945 | 19 | 16 |
| Sagami Wan, Honshu, Japan | 28 August 1945 | 29 August 1945 | 1 | 8 hrs. |